

**TOWN OF HADDAM
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
TOWN HALL
21 FIELD PARK DRIVE, HADDAM, CT 06438
WEDNESDAY, 11 MARCH 2020
APPROVED MINUTES
*Approved as Amended at the 8 July 2020 Meeting***

ATTENDANCE

X	Prem Aithal, Vice Chairman
X	Kate Anderson, Chairman
X	Courtney Emschwiller Swokla
X	Mike Farina
X	David Law
X	Mark Lundgren
A	Cindy MacNeil Sola
X	Robin Munster
X	John Pember
X	Doreen Staskelunas, Secretary
X	Bill Warner, AICP, Town Planner
X	Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

1. Call to Order

Ms. Anderson, chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge was recited.

3. Attendance

Attendance was taken.

3. Approval of Agenda

Add: Welcome New Member – John Pember.

MOTION: Doreen Staskelunas motioned to approve the 11 March 2020 agenda as amended. Prem Aithal second. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Public Comment

There were no comments from those in attendance.

5. Welcome New Member – John Pember

Ms. Anderson reported Mr. Pember was official appointed to EDC at the Board of Selectmen's (BOS) meeting on Monday, 9 March 2020.

Welcome, John!

6. Town Planner's Report

Mr. Warner distributed copies of his report and reviewed with the Commission.

Higganum Center: CT Main Street – Explained the planning and zoning aspects for the Town (done by P&Z) and the promotion and implementation of those two (done by EDC). Need to organize the business and property owners to get them involved. **Haddam Elementary School (HES)** – Have not heard back from the private school, but they are probably dealing with COVID-19 just like everyone else. Town submitted initial lease terms. **Connections** – Town will retain a company familiar with laying out trails and to connect the Center to the natural resources which is recommended in the study as well as the Blue/Green Way looking at the rail line along the river, meeting with Middletown and the Chamber of Commerce. **Scovil Hoe Building** – Have \$225,000. Have completed/advertised an RFP due on 1 April 2020. Work will address possible acquisition of the property, liability issues (town not to be responsible). Believes the goal should be an occupy-able shell and begin moving people in. **Brownfield Remediation/Revitalization** – State legislature approved bonding on 11 March 2020. \$30 million in fiscal year 2020 and \$17 million in fiscal year 2021. It's up to the governor to move that over to the Bonding Commission to approve it. This is at the sole discretion of the governor (meeting scheduled for 27 March 2020). **Community Septic System** – Conceptual plan submitted to state, Dept. of Public Health, and DEEP. With legislature approving bonding – Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) for small towns with infrastructure projects. Hope to secure funding for final design and road crossings (most expensive and complicated element of project). **Rossi Property** – Working on justifying their purchase price. This parcel is the lynch pin – critical to the town's success. **Citizens Bank** – Have not heard back from the Real Estate Investment Trust, but are still trying to reach out. Would like to discuss potential connection to community septic when available. Location would be a great restaurant site. **Town Garage** – This will depend on the Rossi site. Briefly discussed the potential costs for a new site - \$8 million outside of the Center; whereas, with the Rossi site using existing construction - \$4 million including acquisition. Ms. Anderson asked if P&Z would be making a site recommendation anytime soon. Mr. Warner stated no, explaining that it should be the BOS who makes the decision and then it would go before P&Z for an 8-24 Report. **Two New Businesses** – A sign company in the former Republican Town Headquarters (the building where TechNet and Fork in the Road are located) and a consignment shop moving in across from Dunkin Donuts. The vacancies are slowly filling up. **Former Duffy's Pub** - Is coming along slowly but surely. **Steady Habit** – Walls and bar have been framed, equipment within the building. Basic electrical wiring in question. Mrs. Munster noted Steady Habit is putting in another location in Hampton.

Tylerville: Day Care – New construction approved by P&Z. This is an experienced provider. Have heard from the architect, but have not heard when the site plans will be submitted. **Sidewalks, Bridge Road** – Had a very good informational meeting on Thursday, 27 February 2020. Well attended and well supported. A lot of information obtained about the number of walkers along the route. **Multi-family** – Two developers looking at this – 105 Bridge Road would be a 60 unit project and Brookes Court could be larger depending upon the market. P&Z approved multi-family use and the regulations allow it. Lower interest rates should help, but slowing economy could hurt.

Haddam Center: Sidewalks – Currently have a \$600,000 grant to repair existing sidewalk. Have gotten the state to agree to be more creative (allow more landscaping and benches). This area is an historical gem. Have received a grant from Eversource to have historical society research key historical elements – envision a walking area where elementary school children will walk the area to learn about Haddam history. **Jail** – Very successful restaurant group is very interested – nine restaurants in Connecticut. Haddam residents spend approximately \$8 million on food/drink a year and three-quarters of that is outside of Haddam. **7 Island Dock Building** – Former Marin Environmental across from the Haddam Meadows. Special Permit approved for a 36 bed residential facility. This will be a huge addition to the grand list to convert the building to residential. Just added a tennis court and swimming pool to their plans. **Five (5) Town EDC Group** – A tourism website. Haddam's page is up and running. Currently contacting Haddam businesses about being on the site. Ms. Anderson stated the site is very visually driven so if anyone has photos of any landmarks they would like to submit to please send them to either Mr. Warner or her. It can be found at: <https://www.explorectshoreline.com/listing/explore-haddam/>.

Mrs. Staskelunas asked if this site is the same as adding events to the calendar. Ms. Anderson stated the town doesn't have control to upload the website only passing the information along.

In conclusion, Mr. Warner stated there is a lot going on and that Mucket Madness is a great idea in terms of the four points approach from CT Main Street – promotion, organization, economic restructuring, and design. The Commission thanked Mr. Warner for the updates.

6. Old Business

a. EDC Member Discussion – Mucket Madness Day/River Days

Ms. Anderson clarified that this portion of the meeting regarding Mucket Madness and River Days is strictly for the Commission.

Mucket Madness Day - Mr. Pember reported he had contacted the Community Foundation, Middletown, per the recommendation to try to establish the best way to set up the non-profit in order to get a checking account to flow some of the funds through. Based on timing, the Foundation recommended if there is an existing local non-profit that would like to be the backbone of Mucket Madness and they would receive the profits from the event (donation), perhaps that non-profit's EIN number could be used to open an account for Mucket Madness. Mr. Pember stated it's unclear now the event is to be managed - whether there will be net proceeds where a donation could be made or managing the event to break even. Mr. Pember stated in talking to the Foundation they were aware of the library (Brainerd).

Mr. Lundgren introduced Art Wiknik, the man behind the Mucket. Mr. Lundgren stated there is just under \$2,000 raised and \$500 is earmarked for the band DizzyFish (check needs to be mailed out; this is a non-refundable deposit). Mr. Lundgren thanked DizzyFish for lowering their fee (\$1,750) for this event and noted that they will be bringing their own equipment. Mr. Lundgren stated he is not looking to make a profit, but would like a very healthy bank book at the end in order to roll it over to next year's event; and if there is a profit, he would like Mr. Wiknik, who owns the name of the Mucket and has only given EDC permission the use of the name, to have a say in where the profits are donated. Mr. Lundgren reported he has received a \$250 mini grant from Youth & Family Services (through the United Way).

Mr. Lundgren stated the tractor parade committee is doing very well and funding will be needed for the sprint triathlon. Mr. Lundgren also stated that he has reached out to Bob McGarry, First Selectman, to meet with him in regard to insurance and police needed for the event. If there are additional insurances, quotes will need to be obtained. Mr. Lundgren spoke in regard to incidental expenditures and that he may have to come back to EDC for some funding.

Mr. Lundgren introduced Chuck Cook, Grimm's Haunted House, who provided seed money and is assisting with setting up a Facebook page for the event. Mr. Lundgren stated he and Mr. Cook will be attending a Park and Rec meeting (Thursday, 12 March 2020) to see how they may be able to help.

Mr. Lundgren reported that he had spoken to three managers at Liberty Bank for a good hour. Mr. Lundgren also stated that he will be looking for sponsorships for the triathlon and the tractor parade. The only pressing item at this time is getting a check out to DizzyFish.

Mr. Pember stated as people start to register for the triathlon, he'll need to deposit those checks. A brief discussion followed in regard to potential non-profits – the Lions Club, the library (Mrs. Staskelunas will check with them). Mr. Pember stated he feels EDC should link to a non-profit that is already established that can open a new checking account. Mr. Aithal asked that the Farmers' Market be included. Mr. Pember stated he's looking for the ability to deposit and write checks as needed. Mrs. Staskelunas asked about the Grange. Helen Hanson stated she's associated with the Grange and can assist. Ms. Pawlicki, Mr. Lundgren, and Mr. Pember to discuss this further after the meeting.

River Days – Mrs. Munster reported the application needs to be submitted and she is willing to do so. Mrs. Munster stated she will ask for the 15th of August and does not guarantee that DEEP will approve the date or that fireworks will be allowed. Mrs. Munster will put down what has been done previously such as non-profit, town only vendors. Mrs. Munster noted in the past she has borrowed traffic control from the Valley Railroad and that's her plan for this year; and perhaps they would be willing to assist with Mucket Madness. Mrs. Munster also noted that River Days doesn't start until 5:00 p.m. Ms. Anderson stated with the event potentially being in August, the fireworks would need to start at a later hour. Mrs. Munster stated it's unclear who will handle the fireworks.

Mr. Lundgren stated the plan is to hold Mucket Madness Day and then River Days. Mr. Lundgren stated he has names for the food truck vendors, but he does need help. Mr. Lundgren spoke in regard to fliers for the triathlon that will be distributed all along the shoreline.

b. Mucket - Update

Ms. Anderson reported the renderings are done and Mr. Wiknik has given his approval. In regard to pricing, the large statues are \$440 each plus shipping \$240-385 depending upon shipping rates and travel distance and the 7 inch tall miniature statues are \$39 each. It was asked how many will EDC be purchasing and how to advertise if people would like to purchase their own. Ms. Anderson stated EDC will need to reach out to businesses noting that Greg McKenna, Nutmeg Pharmacy, provided a significant amount of money to get this project going and believes it would be appropriate for EDC to provide him with a statue. Discussion also followed in regard to purchasing a statue for the Higganum Green and the Town Office Building; how the statue will be mounted (all materials for installation will be provided; however, EDC is responsible for putting it together); the possibility of using a miniature statue as a trophy; where the statues will be made (ICON Poly, central Nebraska); the need to discuss with ICON Poly lead time for production and shipping; and the Commission to discuss at their April meeting the number of statues to be ordered.

c. Higganum Farmers' Market – Follow Up

Mr. Aithal reported he looked at potential budget numbers and the bank account is a critical component. Mr. Aithal stated he and Mrs. Swokla are only looking to break even with the farmers' market. Just looking at the 10 regular vendors being charge \$150 for the season would provide \$1,500 and this would finance a market master for five hours a week for 17 weeks at minimum wage. Mrs. Swokla reported that one of the farmers is interested in taking the task on. Mr. Aithal stated he is looking at partial season packages and those additional funds could be used for bands. If five partial vendors came on, that would finance four bands and advertising. Mrs. Swokla reported there are other vendors who are interested in participating, but only part-time.

Mr. Pember asked if there was any way to open the farmers' market account through the town. Ms. Anderson stated the EDC cannot accept money, they can only accept goods, but the ultimate goal is to eventually have it operate independently of EDC.

d. Charrette Result – EDC 90-day Agenda – Continued Discussion

Ms. Anderson reported Larry Maggi, FireWorks Hearth and Home, has offered to host an informal meet and greet pertaining to a merchants association at FireWorks, 112 Bridge Road. At this time, a date/time for this meeting has not been selected. Ms. Anderson stated at this time, Mr. McGarry has committed a town employee who would attend these meetings. The intent of this association is for the business owners to have a voice as to what's happening in their areas. Although this is not an EDC sponsored event, Ms. Anderson will advise the Commission of when the meet and greet is scheduled.

e. Qigong

Ms. Anderson reported the classes have moved to the Saybrook at Haddam, 1556 Saybrook Road, Haddam.

7. New Business

a. CT Main Street – Discuss Presentation and Next Steps

Ms. Anderson reported a meeting needs to be scheduled to discuss the next steps and that CT Main Street will come back for a more in depth discussion with business and property owners to get a better idea of where the town sees it going.

b. Budget

Ms. Anderson reported there are no containers for the new garland; she will obtain a quote and the Commission can vote on the matter at the April meeting. A brief discussion followed in regard to donations of containers.

8. Chairman's Report

Ms. Anderson reported on the following:

Dancing Daffodils, Halfinger Farm – Saturday, 14 March 2020, 11:00 a.m., Classic Ribbon Cutting at 11:15 a.m. Tours, history of property, background on daffodils, local artists. Event will be held rain or shine. Pick your own daffodils.

Pop Up Market, Antiques/Collections, HES – Saturday and Sunday, 14 and 15 March. Unclear of the time frame.

Town Budget – Getting through the budget season. Workshops still to be held. Once completed there will be a public hearing/town meeting.

Board of Education (BOE), Resignation – A BOE member has resigned and a meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, 24 March 2020. This will need to go to a town meeting vote to replace that resignation and nominations are made from the floor and are open to everyone. Mr. Aithal has expressed interest in the position.

9. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Doreen Staskelunas motioned to approve the 13 November 2019 meeting minutes as submitted. David Law second. Motion carried with Mr. Aithal, Mr. Lundgren, and Mr. Pember abstaining.

Corrections to the 8 January 2020 minutes – Under Thinktank, beginning on page 4 and continuing throughout the balance of the minutes - correct "Janet Verney" to "Joan Fox".

MOTION: Mark Lundgren motioned to approve the 8 January 2020 meeting minutes as amended. David Law second. Motion carried with Mrs. Munster and Mr. Pember abstaining.

MOTION: Robin Munster motioned to approve the 25 February 2020 Special Meeting minutes as submitted. Mark Lundgren second. Motion carried with Mrs. Swokla, Mr. Farina, and Mrs. Staskelunas, and Mr. Pember abstaining.

12 February 2020 Minutes – Tabled.

2 December 2019 Minutes - Ms. Anderson noted there were no minutes as the meeting was cancelled.

10. Volunteer/Public Discussion – Mucket Madness/River Days

As this portion of the meeting was designated for volunteer discuss and did not require EDC members to remain, Ms. Anderson adjourned the meeting. Ms. Anderson turned the meeting over to Mark Lundgren to lead the volunteer discussion.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bunny Hall Batzner

Bunny Hall Batzner
Recording Clerk

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 8 April 2020.